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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0913  
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 0893  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 0252

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SUBJECT: BELGIANS BELIEVE EU TROIKA BEST PLACED TO WORK  
JOINTLY WITH US ON FOREIGN FIGHTER ISSUE

REF: SECSTATE 92339

Classified By: Political Counselor Theodore H Andrews, Reasons 1.4 (b)  
and (d)

¶1. (S) The Belgian government is reluctant, but not unalterably opposed to working jointly with the U.S. on blocking the infiltration of foreign fighters into Iraq. FM De Gucht Deputy Chief of Staff Bodson told polcouns in a recent conversation that the MFA thinks it would be more appropriate and effective for the EU troika countries to deal with this matter. That said, Bodson said there may be circumstances in which it might be better for individual member states to work directly with Belgian embassies in delivering joint demarches. Belgian chiefs of mission in the region "are available," he said to consult directly with U.S. counterparts on devising the best approach.

¶2. (C) In response to questions, Bodson explained that the MFA's reluctance to go out on a limb on this issue was not entirely the result of a desire to stay out of the limelight. FM De Gucht was now a caretaker minister and thus could not readily launch new initiatives, particularly on controversial subjects like Iraq. Giving this issue wide publicity would "guarantee" a requirement for De Gucht to raise it with the broader cabinet, where it would probably face a hostile reception. Fox  
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